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Message Text

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63
ORIGIN EB-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /004 R

666
DRAFTED BY: EB:NLPAZDRAL:BT
APPROVED BY: EB: NLPAZDRAL
DIST: EB, ISO (ONLY)
---------- 034986
R 152019Z NOV 75
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION OECD PARIS

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FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ENDERS

FOLLOWING REPEAT USNATO 6210 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BONN AND MOSCOW
17 NOV 75

QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 USNATO 6210

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PFOR NATO UR GW EAGR
SUBJECT: AGRICULTURE AND POLITICS IN THE SOVIET UNION

FRG DEL HAS CIRCULTED IN POLITICAL COMMITTEE FOLLOWING ANALYSIS
OF AGRICULTURE AND POLITICS IN THE SOVIET UNION WHICH WAS
BASED ON REPORTING FROM FRG EMBASSY IN MOSCOW.

BEGIN TEXT:

1. MR BREZHNEV CANNOT BE VERY HAPPY ABOUT THE RATHER MODEST
RESULTS OF HIS AGRICULTURAL POLICY SINCE 1965 WHICH COMPARE
UNFAVOURABLY WITH UNUSUALLY HIGH EXPENDITURES. WHILE A
GRATIFYING UPWARD DEVELOPENT OF AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT TOOK PLACE
DURING THE FIVE YEAR PLANNING PERIOD FROM 1966 TO 1970 COMPARED
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WITH THE PERIOD FROM 1961 TO 1965,THESE SUCCESSES CLEARLY

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LAGGED BEHIND THE OPTIMISTIC FORECASTS OF 1965. MR BREZHNEV
APPARENTLY OVERESTIMATED THE CAPABILITIES NOT ONLY OF
AGRICULTURE AS SUCH BUT ALSO OF THE SUPPORTING INDUSTRIES,
BECAUSE THE PRODUCTION OF MINERAL FERTILZER AND AGRICULTURAL
MACHINERY WAS, FOR THE MOST PART, MUCH BLEOW THE PLANNING
FIGURES.

2. THE CPSU PARTY CONGRESS WILL
SHOW TO WHAT EXTENT MR BREZHNEVS PRESTIGE AND POSITION AS
PARTY CHIEF HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY THESE DEVELOPEMNTS. IF ONE
TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE LATENT BUT PERSISTENT CRITICISM FROM
PARTY GROUPS CONCERNING HIS WESTERN AND DETENTE POLICY CONCEPT,
HIS POSITION TODAY APPEARS TO SHOW SOME PARALLELS TO THAT OF
MR KHRUSHCHEV IN MID-1964.

3. IN PREARING HIS PROGRESS REPORT TO THE 25TH PARTY CONGRESS
FO THE CPSU, BREZHNEV WILL NO DOUBT RECALL WHAT HE TOLD THE 23RD
PARTY CONGRESS ON 29 MARCH 1966 WHERE HE RIGHTLY CRITICIZED
THE AGRICULTRUAL POLICY OF HIS PREDECESSOR KHRUSHCHEV WHO WAS
DEPOSED IN 1964. HE SAID ON THAT OCCASION : " AS A RESULT
OF A CONSIDERABLE DECLINE IN THE RATE OF GROWTH OF OUTPUT,
THE TASKS SET FOR AGRICULTURE IN THE SEVEN YEAR PLAN(1959-1965)
WERE NOT ACCOMPLISHED. THE CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE WAS UNABLE
TO ACCEPT SUCH A SITUATION WITH INDIFFERENCE."

4. IN THE MEANTIME, MR BEZHNEV HIMSELF WILL BE UNABLE TO
VIEW THE SITUATION OF SOVIET AGRICULTURE WITH EQUANIMITY .
WHILE MR KHRUSHCHEVS UTOPIAN GROWTH TARGET FOR AGRICULTURE FOR
THE PERIOD 1961 TO 1965 (47PCT) WAS NOT REACHED (ACTUAL FIGURE:
PLUS 12.5PCT), THIS IS HARDLY LESS TRUE OF THE MORE RELAISTIC
PLANNING TARGET SET BY MR BREZHNEV FOR THE PERIOD 1971 TO 1975
(PLUS 20 TO 22PCT), BECAUSE THE REAL GROWTH DURING THE LAST FIVE
YEARS IS LIKELY TO BE BELOW 10PCT AND, IF THE LATEST
WESTERN ESTIMATES CONCERNING THE SOVIET GRAIN HARVEST (AMOUNT-
ING TO 170MILLION TONS) ARE CORRECT, IT SHOULD BE
CLOSER TO 5PCT.

5. THIS DISAPPOINTING DEVELOPMENT WEIGHS ALL THE MORE
HEAVILY WITH MR BREZHNEV SINCE, FOR REASONS OF POWER AND
PRESTIGE, HE TOOK OVER PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR AGRICULTURE.
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HIS - COMPARED WITH MR KHRUSHCHEVS- ORE REALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF
THE POSSIBILITIES OF SOVIET AGRICULTURE, THE VERY HIGH
FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL EXPENDITURES WHICH WERE MADE PARTLY
AGAINST THE OPPOSITION OF THE POLITBUREAU, AND FINALLY AN INCENTIVE
SCHEME FOR THE AGRICULTURAL POPULATION WICH MUST BE DESCIRBED
AS GENEROUS WITHIN THE EXISTING IDEOLOGICAL LIMITS HAVE LED
TO A NOTICEABLE IMPORVEMENT OF AGRICULTUREWM MR BREZHNEVS
MEASURES HAVE HAD THE RESULT THAT THE AGRICULTURAL GROWTH RATE IN

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1966-70 WAS ALMOST TWICE THAT OF THE PERIOD 1961 TO 1965.
HOWEVER, THIS RESULT HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY THE FACT THAT THE
ACTUAL RATE OF GROWTH (PLUS 21PCT) FELL BEHIND EVEN THE
RELATIVELY MODEST PLANNING TARGET OF PLUS 25PCT.
L
6. IN SPITE OF THESE SHORTFALLS, THE EXPENDITURES INITIATED BY
MR BREZHNEV SINCE 1965 TO INCREASE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION
WERE UNUSUALLY HIGH COMPARED WITH EARLIER DECADES. THE RATHER
MODEST PRODUCTION RESULTS- ESPECIALLY OF THE YEARS 1971 TO
1975- MAY INDICATE THE EXISTENCE OF PROBLEMS IN SOVIET
AGRICULTURE WHOSE SIGNIFICANCE HAS APPARENTLY BEEN LARGELY
UNDERESTIMATED BY BREZHNEV AND WHICH ARE BOUND TO BE A SUBJECT
OF HIGH INTERNAL POLITICAL IMPORTANCE DURING THE PREPARATIONS
FOR THE 25TH PARTY CONGRESS.

7. IN THIS CONNECTION, IT IS INTERESTING THAT THE IDEOLOCIALLY
PRECARIOUS PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THE ROLE OF PRIVATELY USED
FARMLAND HAS RECENTLY BEEN REVIVED. MOST OF THE VOICES RAISED
IN FAVOUR OF THE MAINTENANCE OR EVEN THE GREATER EN
COURAGEMENT OF THE PRIVATE USE OF FARMLAND. ALTHOUGH SUCH
STATEMENTS ARE INVARIABLY LINKED WITH SPECIOUS ARGUMENTS
SUCH AS THAT PRIVATE FWRMLAND WILL BECOME SUPERFLOUS AT
A LATER TIME WHILE IT WAS IMPORTANT AT PRESENT TO KEEP ENOUGH
MANPOWER ON THE LAND,ESPECIALLY YOUNGER WORKERS. ALL IN ALL,
HOWEVER, THEY AMOUNT TO AN ADMISSION THAT PRIVATELY QSED
FARMLAND WILL BE INDISPENSABLE IN THE SOVIET UNION FOR AN
UNFORESEEABLE PERIOD.

8. IT IS STILL PREMATURE TO TRY TO ASSESS THE EXTENT TO WHICH
THE SETACKS IN AGRICULTURE HAVE UNDERMINED MR BRUZHNEVS
PRESITIGE AND HIS POSITION AS PARTY CHIEF. SINCE STALINS DEATH,
QUESTIONS OF AGRICULTURE HAVE ALWAYS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT
PART WITH REGARD TO CHANGES IN THE PARTY LEADERSHIP. AS FAR AS
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MR BREZHNEV PERSONALLY IS CONCERNED,THERE IS THE ADDITIONAL
FACTOR THAT HIS WESTERN POLICY HAS NOT REMAINED WITHOUT
OPPOSITION FROM MAINLY IDEOLOGICALLY ORIENTATED PARTY CIRCLES. THERE
IS EVERY INDICATION THAT THERE IS GROWING RESISTANCE
TO A DETENTE CONCEPT WHICH PRIMARILY PROVIDES FOR A
POLITICAL DIALOGUE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION
WITH WESTERN COUNTIRES AND WHICH THEREFORE PROVOKES THE CRITICISM
THAT IT DID NOT TAKE SUFFICIENT ACCOUNT OF THE INTERESTS OF
THE COMMUNIST WORLD MOVEMENT AND OF THE IDEOLOGICAL PRIMACY OF
THE CPSU WITHIN THIS MOVEMENT.

9. SEEN IN THIS LIGHT, MR BREZHNEVS PRESENT POSITION AS
PARTY CHIEF SEEMS TO SHOW SOME PARALLELS WITH THAT OF MR
KHRUSHCHEV IN MID-1964, ALTHOUGH IT CANNOT BE RULED OUT THAT
BREZHNEV WILL WEATHER THE STORM.

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END TEXT. STREATOR

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, FIVE YEAR PLAN, POLITICAL SITUATION, PARTY LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE271471
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EB:NLPAZDRAL:BT
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750399-0318
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751140/aaaabjri.tel
Line Count: 173
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 APR 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <22 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

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Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AGRICULTURE AND POLITICS IN THE SOVIET UNION FRG DEL HAS CIRCULTED IN POLITICAL COMMITTEE FOLLOWING ANALYSIS
TAGS: PFOR, EAGR, EIND, UR, GE, NATO, (BREZHNEV, LEONID I)
To: OECD PARIS
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006